critical digest

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The Weekly That Keeps You Informed of the Current Broadway Critical Scene

Revival Opens Three Week Stand

The Madwoman of Chaillot-City Center, 6/13/50. Martita Hunt stars in Maurice Valency's adaptation of Jean Giraudoux's comedy. John Carradine, Estelle Winwood, and Nydia Westman are featured. Alfred de Liagre, Jr. is the producer.

Magazine Critics Rate Arena Theatre

The Show Off-Arena, Hotel Edison, 5/31/50. Weekly reviewers praised theatre in the round revival of George Kelly's comedy starring Lee Tracy and Jane Seymour. Direction by Martin Manulis was deemed excellent. Trade papers critics doubt if producers, who are staging each play for three weeks, can make commercial success of project. Francis, Billboard, complained about the hardness and poor placing of the seats. Time critic thought parts resembled theatre in the rough. Morehouse, WT&S, Keating of Cue and Newsweek critic also praised proceedings.

Summer Theatre Season Opens

St. John Terrell's Music Circus at Lambertville, N.J. presented New Moon, and Bucks County Playhouse at New Hope, Pa.presented Ruth Chatterton in Smile of the World the first week of June opening the local summer season. Garland, Journal American, wasn't too impressed by either offering viewed on a week end trip. The Romberg musical was great circus, even when it wasn't music; while Miss Chatterton's novel Homeward Borne was more entertaining than her performance in Garson Kanin's flop play. During the summer months Critical Digest will feature reviews of plays tried out in summer theatres coast to coast.

Four Newcomers in Kiss Me, Kate

Seven critics raved all over again when invited to review the Cole Porter musical which has four new leading players. Watts, Post, Garland, Journal American, Sheaffer Eagle and Pollock, Compass, Hawkins, WT&S, Chapman, News and Coleman, Mirror, joined in a chorus of kind words for Anne Jeffreys, Keith Andes, Betty Ann Grove and Danny Daniels. While Anne Jeffreys received most of the bouquets, Chapman saved his for Betty Ann Grove, who made her Broadway debut. He reported that Author Porter roared at her handling of the "True to You" song.

Broadway Hits Revisited

South Pacific's new lead Ray Middleton drew a pro review from Hobe, Variety, who found the book of the musical has been tightened and clarified. He did suggest that director Logan could rehearse the ensemble scenes for the details have lost their original precision. Otherwise the show is just as fine as it was 14 months ago...500 performances of Detective Story haven't dulled the intensity and conviction of Ralph Bellamy in the lead, reports Hawkins, WT&S. Kingsley, the critic feels, had something vital and astute to say in this police drama. He says it with the taste and ingenuity of a super craftsman...Hobe, Variety, joins the other critics who have revisited Mister Roberts and who have deemed it the funniest, most touching and most entertaining play in town.

Show Closing This Week

Clutterbuck-Biltmore, 12/3/49-6/10/50. Benn Levy comedy takes to subway circuit after successful Broadway run. Critics were split almost evening over comedy which starred Arthur Margetson, Ruth Matteson and Ruth Ford.

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' Off Broadway '

Earth Spirit, Studio 7 version of Frank Wedekind's experimental Erdqueist, received four favorable nods and one con review after its premiere at the Provincetown Playhouse. Calta, Times, Garland, Journal American and Hawkins, WT&S, and Pahodna, Herald Tribune, praised staging of John Stix and acting of Margaret Feury in the lead. Watts, Post, saw little but tedious melodrama in the proceedings...Sex wrecked J.B.Priestly's Home is Tomorrow, a play about the United Nations which the evening production group of the Dramatic Workshop presented at the President Theatre, according to Atkinson, Times. He thought some of the acting was good, but the wordy speeches on politics and morals tended to bore..."Q" Productions playing of Jean-Jacques Bernard's The Unquiet Spirit, a metaphysical play portraying the feelings of two characters who never meet, won the support of Hawkins, WT&S. Carey Calvert received top acting honors. Jusl Rodack directed.

' Interview Round Up '

JOHN GIELGUD...The acter-director of The Lady's Not for Burning, the Fry play which will be seen in N.Y. in the fall, was found by ABC, Nancy Craig tt Stratford-on-Avon leading a very hectic life. He is directing four Shakespeare plays and appearing in five at the Festival. The Stratford Company cannot get to the U.S. for at least two years. He feels that the success of Fry and Eliot's verse plays heralds a new renaissance of language in the theatre.

VINETTE CARROLL...The Negro actress who will play the role of Cleopatra's faithful servant in the Paulette Goddard summer touring company of Shaw's Caesar and Cleopatra also follows a career as a clinical psychologist in the N.Y.Board of Education. She is determined never to portray stereotyped Negro roles, she told Pollock, Compass. The actress wins a "psychic income" from acting that she doesn't find in her other job.

ALBERT DEKKER...The Hollywood star who has become the third man to portray the Willy Loman role in Death of a Salesman concedes no stigma in taking over a role in an established hit, he revealed to Rice, Post. Each actor brings his own conception, his own environment, good and bad points to a part.

HERA STONE...The original Henry Aldrich, of Clifford Goldsmith's What a Life and radio fame, considers himself the first casualty of TV, he admitted to WNBC Hi Jinx He was too old for the part. Some day he would like to do a radio program of all the actors who were put out of jobs thanks to TV.

EVA GABOR...The glamorous maid in The Happy Time shocked Wilson, Post, when she said she has given up men completely. She plans a fantastic career for herself, but men only want to dance and talk about themselves.

JEAN LAGUARDIA...the daughter of NYC's famous mayor wrote the music for the Barnard College revue this year. She told Fischer, WT&S, that she doesn't expect to do anything really good in serious music for at least 20 years. After graduation she would like to do background music for TV.

' Checking the Ads '

Display ad for The Show Off would have reader believe that Atkinson, Times, raved about the George Kelly play. While he did praise the acting of Tracy and Seymour, he did not think that even arena staging could make a dull play interesting. He clearly stated that the play was dated and only mildly diverting.

' Key to NYC Criticism At A Glance '

Shows are rated as to how the critics liked them, not if they think they will be hits. "So-So" means the critic did not state directly if he recommended the show for an entertaining or stimulating evening. Photostats of reviews may be obtained at 25 cents each to subscribers, 50 cents each to others.

1. NY Times
2. NY Herald Tribune
3. NY News
4. NY Mirror
5. NY Compass (PM, Star)
6. NY Post
7. NY Sun (Morehouse)
8. NY Journal American
9. NY-World Telegram and Sun
10. Brooklyn Eagle
11. Newark News
12. Women's Wear Daily
13. Daily Worker
14. Wall Street Journal
15. Journal of Commerce
16. George Jean Nathan
17. Morning Telegraph
18. Variety
19. Billboard
20. Theatre Arts
21. Catholic World
22. Commonweal
23. Cue
24. Chr.Sci.Monitor
25. Sat.Review Lit.
26. Newsweek
27. Time
28. Nation
29. New Republic
30. New Yorker

The Cocktail Party-Miller, 1/2/50. Pro: 20 votes. Con: 2-9-14-22-25-29. So-So: 16-30. None: 13-21.

Come Back, Little Sheba-Booth, 2/15/50. Pro: 16 votes. Con: 2-4-7-12-27. So-So: 3-6-30. None: 13-15-21-24-25-28.

The Consul-Barrymore, 3/15/50. Pro: 26 votes. Con: 22. So-So: 6-29. None: 21.

Death of a Salesman-Morosco, 2/10/49. Pro: 28 votes. Con: 29. So-So: 27. None: 5

Detective Story-Hudson, 3/23/49. Pro: 21 votes. Con: 5-10-11-13-16-23-25-28-29.

Gentlemen Prefer Blondes-Ziegfeld, 12/8/49. Pro: 21 votes. Con: 6-21-28. So-So: 16-19-22-23-27.

The Happy Time-Plymouth, 1/24/50. Pro: 20 votes. Con: 5-6-7-20-26-27-28-30. None: 13-21.

Kiss Me, Kate-Century-12-31-48. Pro: 28 votes. Con: 29. None: 28.

Lost in the Stars-Music Box, 10/30/49. Pro: 14 votes. Con: 8-9-13-20-21-22-24-25-28-29-30. So-So: 4-27. None: 16.

The Member of the Wedding-Empire, 1/5/50. Pro: 25 votes. Con: 16. So-So: 2-27-30. None: 21.

Mister Roberts-Alvin, 2/13/48. Pro: 24 votes. Con: 21-24. So-So: 13-16-17. None: 28.

Peter Pan-Imperial, 4/24/50. Pro: 19 votes. Con: 8-16-30. So-So: 6-14-19. None: 13-20-21-28.

South Pacific-Majestic, 4/8/49. Pro: 19 votes. Con: 27. So-So: 23. None: 5-10-11-13-14-16-22-28-29.

Texas Li'l Darlin'-Hellinger, 11/25/49. Pro: 12 votes. Con: 1-4-7-8-18-19-23-29-30. So-So: 2-5-10-11-20-26-27. None: 25-28.

Where's Charley?-St. James, 10/11/48. Pro: 16 votes. Con: 6-7-12-13-16-19-22-24-25-26. So-So: 4-27. None: 10-28.

The Wisteria Trees-Martin Beck, 3/29/50. Pro: 14 votes. Con: 2-7-9-10-16-22-23-25-26-27-28-30. So-So: 18-29. None: 13-21.

Tickets Please!-Coronet, 4/27/50. Pro: 20 votes. Con: 11-16-29-30. So-So: 26.